

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 105879 TOSEC 040119

FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR EDITORIAL
DATED MAY 9, 1977, HEADED "WHAT VIETNAM STRATEGY?"

2. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS PLEDGED AGAIN THAT THE UNITED
STATES WILL NOT OFFER ANY ECONOMIC AID TO VIETNAM. THIS IS
NOT SURPRISING. IT IS SIMPLY RECOGNIZING THE POLITICAL
REALITIES AT HOME. EVEN IF IT FAVORED RECONSTRUCTION
ASSISTANCE FOR HANOI, IT WOULD BE UNABLE TO PUSH SUCH A
REQUEST THROUGH A RELUCTANT CONGRESS. THE DEPARTMENT'S
PLEDGE IN FACT CAME JUST AFTER THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
VOTED TO BAR EVEN TALKING ABOUT AID FOR VIETNAM.

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3. MOST AMERICANS NO DOU;T SHARE THIS MOOD EVEN FOUR YEARS
AFTER THE END OF HOSTILITIES. THE VIETNAMESE HAVE INSISTED
THAT AMERICA OWES THEM SOMETHING UNDER THE PARIS CEASE-FIRE
AGREEMENT AND BECAUSE OF A SECRET PROMISE MADE BY FORMER
PRESIDENT NIXON. BUT INASMUCH AS THE NORT' VIETNAMESE
VIOLATED THAT AGREEMENT BY STEPPING UP THEIR INVASION OF
THE SOUTH, T;EY HARDLY HAVE A LEGITIMATE CLAIM FOR

"REPARATIONS."

4. HOW THIS STATE DEPARTMENT ACTION WILL AFFECT THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS MOVED RATHER QUICKLY AND DRAMATICALLY TO PUT THE WAR BEHIND, WITH THE RESULT THAT SO FAR SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE TALKS. WASHINGTON SAYS IT IS PREPARED TO VOTE VIETNAM INTO THE UNITED NATIONS NEXT TIME AROUND AND TO LIFT THE TRADE EMBARGO ONCE RELATIONS ARE ESTABLISHED. HANOI, FOR ITS PART, PROMISES TO CONTINUE SEARCHING FOR THOSE 800 MISSING AMERICAN SERVICEMEN, ALTHOUGH THERE IS LITTLE HOPE ON EITHER SIDE THEY WILL BE FOUND.

5. THE DIPLOMATIC OBJECTIVE OF RESTORING RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM IS OF COURSE A SENSIBLE ONE. DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION DOES NOT MEAN APPROVAL OF A NATION'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT; IT IS SIMPLY THE MEANS WHEREBY STATES ASSOCIATE AND DO BUSINESS WITH EACH OTHER. THAT MR. CARTER WANTS TO RESOLVE THIS DANGLING ISSUE IS ALL TO THE GOOD.

6. HOWEVER, SOME MISGIVINGS ARE HEARD IN WASHINGTON THESE DAYS ABOUT THE PACE AT WHICH THE PRESIDENT IS PROCEEDING. HAS MR. CARTER PERHAPS INFLATED VIETNAMESE EXPECTATIONS BY SENDING A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION THERE? DID WASHINGTON GIVE HANOI A SIGNAL THAT THE UNITED STATES IS IN A HURRY AND THEREFORE MISLEAD IT INTO THINKING IT CAN GET WHAT IT WANTS?

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7. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY STILL, IS IT GOOD DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO TALK OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM BEFORE IT HAS DONE SO WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA? JUST HOW IS THIS POLICY PERCEIVED IN PEKING, WHICH IS TRADITIONALLY SENSITIVE TO THE STATUS AND RANK IT IS ACCORDED BY OUTSIDERS? GRANTED WASHINGTON IS CONDUCTING TALKS WITH THE CHINESE ABOUT FINANCIAL CLAIMS, BUT THESE ARE NOT A SUBJECT OF PRIME IMPORTANCE. HOW DOES THE UNITED STATES VIEW ITS TIES WITH VIETNAM IN THE TOTAL ASIAN CONTEXT?

8. THESE ARE QUESTIONS THAT NEED CLARIFYING. WHILE ONE IS PLEASED TO SEE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION VIGOROUSLY TACKLING THE VIETNAMESE ISSUE, IT IS TO BE HOPED IT IS NOT DOING THIS IN ISOLATION FROM OTHER PROBLEMS IN THE FAR EAST. SO FAR, HOWEVER, NO OVERALL POLICY IS DISCERNIBLE. (END TEXT) CHRISTOPHER

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